

## **Islamic scholars are like doctors**

It is like a scholar said : In majority of countries, religion is restricted to home. And science is everywhere. Science and technology is what you see everywhere - from your bedroom to your office. In between lie everything based on science. So science has become something which everyone follows and religion something restricted to home.

Religion is a way of life. Religion shows us the way of life. It is something which should be everywhere. Science may be limited to certain places, but religion is belief, faith, practice and are supposed to be found everywhere. But today, religion has become something which people easily intermingle with. You see, today you find many people, without a religious background of study, referring books and giving out their own solutions. For them, the books are available in their language. So they read them. And then give laws as to how things should be done or what are prohibited and allowed. They start becoming scholars of a religion without any actual degree. It is not a problem in Islam in particular, it is a problem being faced by all religions today. You may ask why does one need a degree to understand religion. One does not need a degree to understand, but requires a degree to give official rulings. An example would make things clear.

Something similar but done differently is science. For example, if a person is ill, does he do self diagnosis and self-prescription? Does he read the books and find out what he is suffering from and then read what chemicals cure it and then take them accordingly? No. Even though books of medicine are in english, there is a dictionary of medicine to understand medicine-related terms, there are books on drugs, books on specific diseases, books on diagnosis, books on cure - every possible thing needed is there. But do we do it? No. Why don't we - I believe you know the answer to this. Similarly is religion. Religion has become a plaything today. What is required is that only professionals carry out the ruling part. The general people need to read the scriptures, understand them, read the supporting material (hadith), understand them, ask doubts to scholars on topics they understand less, or ask scholars regarding worldly matters they face. If they themselves want to make rulings, then we never discourage it. We just say that you need to become a scholar first. Once you do, you are free to extract rulings. It's just like - you first become a doctor and then treat patients. Do not open and work in a hospital for which you do not have a degree.

The above was not said to stop anyone from reading religious books, or books on hadith, or other books on religion. Please do not misunderstand. It was said so that one knows the pre-requisites first. Just because a person understands a verse or chapter of any scripture

differently, that does not mean that the verse meant that. No. We need to ask the scholars or that particular religion to clarify whether we understood it right or not. Because they are our doctors in religion. Remember, as general doctors treat our physical illness, these doctors treat our spiritual illness.